

A special helping paw

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Teamwork: Jessica Greenfield, 20, Evansville (left), gets helpful hints from Amanda Vibbart, an inmate at the Indiana Women's Prison, on caring for Ozzie, a yellow Lab. Ozzie will be the assistance dog for Greenfield, who uses a wheelchair.

(Matt Detrich/The Star).

Sit. Speak. Turn off the lights. These dogs can do it all, thanks to the training they've gotten from female prison inmates as part of a program to place the animals in the homes of disabled Hoosiers.

The Indiana Canine Assistant and Adolescent Network, or ICAAN, has placed 20 dogs with people with disabilities in recent years and is placing five more dogs with new owners this month.

A graduation ceremony for the latest class of graduating canines is planned today at the Indiana Women's Prison east of Downtown Indianapolis.

Beyond turning lights on or off, the dogs can open doors and fetch canes, wheelchairs and crutches, among other "tricks."

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About The Department of Correction

The Department employs over 8,000 employees and houses 24,000 adult and juveniles in 32 facilities, ranging from minimum to maximum custody, prison camps, juvenile facilities and work release centers. The Department's home page on the Internet can be found at: <http://www.in.gov/indcorrection>. The Department's Re-entry Site can be found: <http://www.reentry.in.gov>.